



State of Connecticut
Department of Aging and Disability Services
Office of the Commissioner

Testimony before the Aging Committee

Amy Porter – Commissioner

March 9, 2021

House Bill 6554, An Act Concerning Aging and COVID-19

Chairman Slap, Chairman Phipps, Senator Kelly, Representative Wilson and distinguished members of the Aging Committee - my name is Amy Porter. I am the Commissioner of the Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS) and I thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on House Bill 6554.

This bill has a very admirable goal, namely, to reach a fuller understanding of the effects of COVID-19 on Connecticut's older residents as well as its effects on residents of nursing homes and managed residential communities. We certainly support the effort to be more knowledgeable about the consequences of COVID-19 on our older population especially since the well-being of older adults lies at the very core of our agency's mission.

Like you, the Department of Aging and Disability Services is committed to a better understanding of how COVID-19 has affected the lives of older adults and also to planning the most effective ways to respond to any future outbreak of a similar nature. We stand ready to work with any and all state agencies and other parties that share our concern and your concern that we develop the best possible practices and protocols for any future epidemics and pandemics.

With respect, we are not sure that the timeline and structure called for in the bill create the optimal path forward for this shared goal. Sadly, the COVID-19 outbreak is not over. A report that is to be completed by November of this year may not be able to encompass all that we know and all that we will know about this pandemic. It will likely be even more difficult to provide you with the best recommendations possible for future pandemic response plans within that time frame. We would also suggest that there may be other, more comprehensive ways to produce a truly useful report on this serious issue. There are so many people, groups and stakeholders who can and should be a part of such a review. A proposal that only includes our three agencies may not be sufficient for this significant and critical task.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to offer this testimony. My office is always available to the Committee and to each of you should you have any questions.